

# Sermon Notes

## INSEPARABLE:

REVELING IN THE INSEPARABLE, UNAVOIDABLE, INDESTRUCTIBLE, UNDYING, INESCAPABLE, UNBENDING, IRRESISTIBLE,  
UNCOMPROMISING, INFLEXIBLE, UNYIELDING, INEXORABLE, UNINTERRUPTED LOVE  
THAT GOD HAS FOR US IN CHRIST JESUS

---

## 2. GOD JUSTIFIES US (ROMANS 8:33)

### I. Criticism and the Primal Fear

### II. God Is for Us

- A. In Romans 8:31, Paul declares: “If God is for us, who can be against us?”
- B. Paul is not suggesting that Christ is a ticket to popularity. He is communicating that *in Christ*, God truly, deeply, and fully approves of his people, though they are still very sinful.
- C. Since God is for us, it doesn’t ultimately matter what people have to say about us. God himself, the Supreme Authority of the universe, the sovereign King of all worlds, is *for* us. If God is *for* us, that’s all that ultimately matters.
- D. In Christ, we have begun to live on another plane of existence, God’s new age. —We are set free from having to be conditioned or controlled by any accusations or negative opinions that people may have toward us, whether these are legitimate or not.
- E. From v 33-39, Paul shows us just how far God is for us.
- F. To help us understand God’s love even more deeply, Paul raises yet another rhetorical question:
  - Rom 8:33: “Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.”

### III. Sinful Saints

- A. Can people continue to lay charges against believers? If we’re talking about a purely earthly level, of course.
- B. In fact, what makes verse 33 so compelling and astonishing is precisely the fact that believers are still plenty sinful. If believers have succeeded in cleaning up every area of their lives, why would they need reassurance against charges? What’s the point of telling us that God justifies us?
- C. Christians can be truly criticized for any number of things. We are sinful and far from perfect.

- D. Granted, since we have come under the controlling power of the Spirit of life, we have a new desire to serve God, please God, and give our lives as offerings of love to our Father.
- E. But spiritual growth is still slow. And where spiritual growth has yet to occur, there we will find sin still clinging to us.
- F. If we have problems with this idea, we need to consider the following:
  - Rom 8:10: “But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”
  - Rom 7:19: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”
- G. The Law is given to show us our sins—and push us to Christ alone for our justification and our sanctification.

#### **IV. But God Justifies**

- A. The question, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?” is not to say that Christians are good, likeable people in themselves. Rather, it sets the stage for us to hear the good word that God speaks over us, in spite of the kinds of people we still are, people who still do bad things.
- B. What is that word? “It is God who justifies” (Gk: *Theos ho dikaiōn*) (v 33). God actually justifies his “still-doing-evil” people.
- C. What does it mean to justify?
  1. To justify is the opposite of bringing a charge or accusation.
  2. To justify is to declare someone innocent. It is to say, “I find no problem with this person. This person is innocent.”

#### **V. God Reckons Sinners Perfectly Obedient to Him**

- A. To appreciate what it means to be justified by God, we must also understand the standard by which God justifies us.
- B. God’s standard is nothing less than perpetual and perfect obedience to his Law.
  - Dt 27:26: “‘Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”
  - Mt 5:48: “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
  - Rom 10:5: “For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.”
- C. If we want to be justified by God through the Law, good intentions are not enough. God wants is action. God wants perfect obedience in every area of life.

- D. How then can anyone ever hope to be justified by God? If the standards of the Law are so great, and we are all sinners, how can we be justified by our works of the Law?
1. That's the point. If we are looking to the Law for justification, it's a dead-end.
  2. While the Law is good, it pronounces death on sinners.
  3. If we want to be justified, there has to be another way that does not involve obedience to the Law.
  4. God himself has provided another way—a Mediator who performs all the obedience that we lack.
  5. Through the Law's accusations, God is pushing us into the arms of the perfect Law-Keeper, our Savior, Jesus.
  6. When we trust in Jesus alone to be our Savior, when we run into the embrace of Jesus, he encloses us into his flesh and blood. He swallows us up into his person. When that happens, Jesus' perfect obedience to God's Law becomes ours.
  7. The result: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are *in Christ Jesus*" (8:1).
- E. What does it mean for God to justify us?
1. It means that God declares us innocent and righteous.
  2. Further, it means that God pronounces us: "NOT GUILTY" but "PERFECT."
  3. God looks at us not primarily as sinners anymore, but as faithful keepers of his Law and faithful sons and daughters *in Jesus Christ*.
  4. God speaks over us: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17).

## VI. Justified

**The Christian life is life at the end of the quest. It is a life that is no longer under Law, but under grace (Rom 6:14). It is a life that is *under* the justifying verdict of God. It is life that takes shape *within* God's delight and approval. It is life that grows and blossoms *inside* God's declaration of "NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST JESUS" (Rom 8:1). The Christian life is essentially the justified life—a life that is protected from all accusation, criticism, contempt, and condemnation by none other than almighty God himself.**

- A. So...we can stand up to the haters, accusers, shamers, and critics, because we are justified us in Christ.
- B. Whether you are an unbeliever or a long-time Christian, this is God's call to you—*come to Jesus*.
- C. God does not require us to clean ourselves up before we come. The cleaning up happens *after* we are absorbed into Christ, *after* we have heard God's irreversible declaration of "not guilty, but innocent and perfect."
- D. In the Gospel, God justifies ungodly people (Rom 4:5).
- E. Once we receive this word from God, it doesn't matter how others may condemn us ever again, because God has set his everlasting love on us (Rom 8:39)

## Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything with which you disagree or found difficult to accept?
3. Can people continue to lay charges against believers? In what way?
4. What does Rom 7:19 and 8:10 teach us about remaining sin in the believer?
5. What does it mean for God to justify us (v 33)? What are the implications?
6. How is God able to justify the sinner (hint: Rom 8:1)?
7. What is the Christian life? How does it relate to justification?